

Fataawaa Regarding Girls' Dolls

Shaykhs Muhammad Ibn Ibraaheem, Ibnul-Uthaymeen & Al-Fowzaan

Shaykh Saalih Al-Uthaymeen (rahimahullaah) said:

"It is surely permissible for little girls to play with dolls that have no clear features. This would be similar to the dolls with which Aa'ishah (radiyallaahu anhaa) played. However, if a doll has clearly distinctive features making it resemble a human being – especially if it also has motion or voice – I would have reservation in my heart against it, because it would then be clearly competing with Allaah's creation...

I believe that it is prohibited to make dolls in a way resembling Allaah's creation. This would be considered of the tasweer (making of images) that is, without a doubt, prohibited. And if they (the dolls) come to us from the Christians and other non-Muslims, the ruling would then be as stated above. As for purchasing such dolls, I urge that we should instead buy toys that have no images, such as bicycles, toy cars, winches, and so on." ¹

Shaykh Saalih Al-Fowzaan (hafidhahullaah) said:

"It is not permissible to hold possession of images of beings with souls, except for the necessary ones such as photographs of identity card, driving license, and so on. All other images are not permissible to possess – not even children's toys or images used for teaching them. The reason for this is the general texts prohibiting making images or using them.

There are many children's toys with no images. The opinion of those who permit using images for children's toys is weak. They rely on the hadith of Aa'ishah's (radiyallaahu anha) toys when she was young. However, some scholars say that this hadith is abrogated by the later prohibition of making images. Others say that the images described in this hadith are not like the images known today. They were made of rags and sticks and did not resemble an animal the way today's images do. This is the more correct opinion, and Allaah knows best. As for today's images, they precisely resemble animals – some of them even moving like animals." ²

Shaykh Muhammad Ibn Ibraaheem Aal ash-Shaykh (rahimahullaah):

"Seeking help from Allaah, the Most High, I say:

Yes! The ruling concerning this modern [doll] differs from the ruling concerning the dolls of Aa'ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her). This difference is due to the fact that this modern "doll" has a real resemblance (tamtheel), imitation (mudaahaat) and likeness (mushaabaha) of the creation of Allaah, The Most High.

Another reason is that these [modern dolls] are exactly [what is meant by] "images", in every sense of the word. They have an elegant appearance, precise craftsmanship, marvellous beauty which has no likeness, nor anything close to it,

¹ Majmoo Fataawaa wa Rasaa'il Saalih Al-Uthaymeen 2:277-278 translated by Muhammad Al-Jibaaly in 'Our Precious Sprouts' p136

² Al-Muntaqaa Min Fataawaa Saalih Al-Fowzaan 3:338-339 translated by Muhammad Al-Jibaaly in 'Our Precious Sprouts' p136-7

in the images which were prohibited by the Pure Islamic Law (ash-Sharee'ah al-Mutahharah).

It does not fall outside the classification of images (suwar), just because it is called a doll, or because its body is small. The reality of things is the only consideration not their names.

This is just as shirk (polytheism, idolatry) remains shirk, even though the one who is practising it calls it istish-faa' (seeking intercession) and tawassul (seeking a means to get near to Allaah); and just as khamr (alcohol) remains khamr, even though the one who uses it calls it nabeedh (a drink made from soaking raisins or dates in water over night).

So, it is [with these dolls]. They are real "images" (suwar), even if they are called children's toys by those who manufacture and trade in them, and those who have fallen victim to [or become fascinated and charmed by] these images.

[It has been reported] in the hadith: There will come a people in the end of time who will declare khamr (alcohol) lawful, and they will call it by [a name] other than its own name. ³

Whoever claims that the dolls of Aa'ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her) were real images (suwar haqeeqiyyah) of that which has a soul (living creatures), then it is upon him to produce the proof (for his claim). And he will never find a way to do that.

Verily, they were not engraved, carved or imprinted from natural minerals [such as that upon which coins are normally impressed] or anything like that. On the contrary, it appears that they were made from wool, cotton, scraps of cloth, reeds or tied-up bones, with a stick running across it (from one side to another), having a shape resembling the dolls presently ⁴ in the hands of the girls living in the Arab lands which are distant from city life and "civilisation," (dolls) which have very little or no resemblance to the forbidden images.

This view is based on the hadith narrated in Saheeh al-Bukhaaree, to the effect that the companions used to have their children fast. Then, if they (the children) asked for food, they (the parents) gave them the toys [dolls] made from wool to entertain them or distract them with it. ⁵

[This view is further supported by] the hadith of Aa'ishah (may allaah be pleased with her) narrated in Sunan Abu Daawood along with its sharh (explanation) where it mentions the horse possessing four wings made of (riqaa') scraps of cloth. ⁶

[It is additionally supported by] What is known about the condition of the Arab as usually being course, using crude utensils, means of transportation, instruments,

³ At -Tabaraani, Ahmad, Ibn Majah, and it has a jayyid (good) chain of narrators. See Silsilah Saheehah 1/136-139, no 90

⁴ Note: This ruling was given more than 40 years ago, in the year 1373H

⁵ Al-Bukhaaree 3/103 no 181

⁶ Abu Daawood 3/1373, no. 4914 [English Edition]; an-Nasaa'ee as-Sunan al-Kubraa, "Ishraat an-Nasaa'I" 1/75; al-Albaanee says the chain of narrators of an-Nasaa'ee is authentic (saheeh) [Aadaab az-Zifaaf pg 275, Arabic Edition 1409H]. As for the chain of narrators of Abu Daawood, al-Albaanee has also declared it to be authentic (saheeh) [Saheeh Sunan Abu Daawood 3/932, no. 4123/4932]. Al-Albaanee also declared it to be authentic (saheeh) in Ghaayah al-Maraam, pg.82, no.129.

toys etc. Therefore, what I have mentioned here is sufficient to convince anyone who is seeking the Truth, if Allaah, the Most High, Wills.

Also, it must be known that no amount of advancement in time can exempt a thing from its legal ruling or status, since the removal of a ruling, which has been established legally, simply due to hawaadith [something new, an event, happening or incident], is not permissible under any circumstances. This is because it would then be abrogation by hawaadith, and that would eventually lead to the removal of the Islamic Law.

Perhaps some of the ignorant are here confused by the saying of Aa'ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her):

If the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) had seen what the women are doing [in these days], he (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) would have prevented them from attending the masjids, just as the women of Banee Israa'eel were prevented.⁷

Praise be to Allah! There is no argument (proof) in these words for the changing of the established legal rulings due to al-hawaadith [new event, happening or incident]. Verily, Aa'ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her) referred the matter [the right to legislate] back to the one who has the right to legislate [the Messenger of Allaah, peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him, who legislates by Allaah's command]

She (may Allaah be pleased with her) said: If he (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) had seen [what is happening today] he (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) would have prevented [them from attending the Masjids].

However, she herself (may Allaah be pleased with her) did not declare it prohibited [knowing that it was not her right], nor did she consider it the right of anyone else to prohibit it [other than the Messenger of Allaah, peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him].

This is clear, Praise be to Allaah! And Allaah is the One Who Grants Success!⁸

⁷ Al-Bukhaaree 1/458, no 828

⁸ Fataawaa Shaykh Muhammad Ibn Ibraaheem. Translated by Abu Muhammad Abdur-Ra'uf Shakir in 'The Islamic Ruling Concerning Tasweer' p196-198